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The construct of adaptability as aid in the selection of foster families.

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University of Massachusetts Amherst

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THE CONSTRUCT OF ADAPTABILITY
AS AN AID IN THE SELECTION OF
FOSTER FAMILIES

A Dissertation Presented

By

JO ANNE SCHOR

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

April 1976

Counseling

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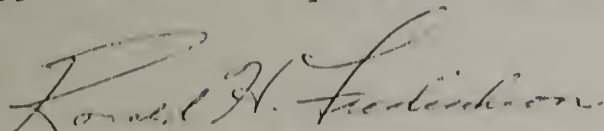
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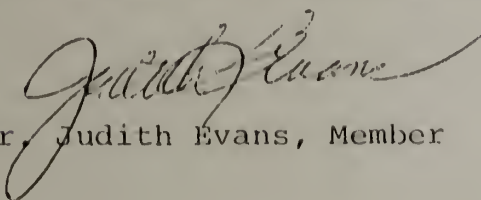
By

JO ANNE SCHOR

Approved as to style and content by:



Dr. Ronald H. Fredrickson, Chairperson



Dr. Judith Evans, Member

Dr. Harold L. Raush, Member

Dr. Louis Fischer, Acting Dean
School of Education

April 1976

Dedication

To my parents, Marge and Manny Schor
for believing in me long
before I did.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In acknowledging the persons who helped me through these past four years of "becoming" I am struck by the diversity of supports that have guided me to this point. In no particular order than of their commitment to me and my struggles, I'd like to thank:

Earl Seidman for trusting his memory;

Jack Wideman for being a guidepost;

Paul and Anne DeMuro for solitude and the beach;

George and Jackie Brown for shelter and acceptance;

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Ronald Fredrickson for believing, encouraging and perservering with me throughout these past four years.

ABSTRACT

The Construct of Adaptability as an Aid in the Selection
of Foster Families (April, 1976)

Jo Anne Schor, B. S., Ohio State University

M.Ed., University of Massachusetts

Directed by: Dr. Ronald Fredrickson

This study was concerned with adopting the constructs of adaptability, as a measure of family functioning, as an aid in the selection of foster families. This was done by (1) developing a family adaptability questionnaire; (2) administering the questionnaire to 39 active foster families, and seven families who applied but were not selected; (3) comparing the total family adaptability scores to agency ratings of the 39 active families.

The questionnaire as it was developed for this study, was based largely on the conceptual definitions developed by Angell (1936). They were: consensus of the spouses on agreement of involvement in family decisions, flexibility of social roles within the family, family cohesion and participation in family activities. These constructs were operationalized into 27 statements. The respondents answered the statements using a seven point Likert scale.

There were a total of 46 families who participated in this investigation; 39 active foster families from the same agency and seven families who applied to become foster

families with the same agency and were not selected. The 39 active families had been selected from an active case roster of 70 families. For the process of selection the following criteria were used; the family was intact with two parents; at least one child had been placed with the family prior to this project; and the family was known to at least two social workers.

Four social workers independently rated the families using a three step procedure. A general rating, a confidence rating and a quadrant ranking was obtained for each family by at least two social workers.

The families were divided into a high, middle and low group determined by the total mean rating given by the social workers for each family. The additional seven families, who applied and were not selected, were used as a reference group. For the purposes of this study only the high and low rated foster families were used for statistical evaluations.

To test Hypothesis I a Pearson correlation was done between the social workers' ratings for a particular family and the family's score on the Family Adaptability Questionnaire. The correlation was $-.28$ and Hypothesis I could not be rejected.

The second hypothesis tested by a t-test was to determine whether the Family Adaptability Questionnaire would discriminate between social workers' ratings of the foster families, when total scores were used for the comparison was

inconclusive and could not be rejected.

Hypothesis III was tested using an analysis of variance to determine whether the three groups could be differentiated by sub-scale scores. None of the sub-scales were able to discriminate among the groups.

The results of this study are judged to be inconclusive with respect to the three hypotheses tested.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to adopt the construct(s) of adaptability, as a measure of family functioning, and as an aid in the selection of foster families. This will be done by (1) developing a family adaptability questionnaire; (2) administering the questionnaire to 40 active foster families, and ten families who applied but were not selected; (3) comparing the total family adaptability scores to agency ratings of the 40 active families; (4) discussing the use of such a scale in the selection of foster families.

Nature of the Problem

The selection of foster parents is an essential area of concern for social agencies interested in identifying functioning families who could adapt to the placement of a foster child in their home.

The aims of foster care are generally agreed upon within the social and judicial systems. The Child Welfare League of America's standards for foster care state:

The objectives should be the promotion of healthy personality development of the child and the amelioration of problems that are personally or socially destructive. Foster family care should provide for the child whose parents cannot do so, experiences and conditions which promote normal maturation (care), which prevent injury to the child (protection), and which correct specific problems which interfere with personality development (treatment). (1959)

The goals of care, protection, and treatment are very explicitly stated, although the actual functional definitions are unclear throughout the literature. The most recent copy of the proposed regulations for agencies offering foster care placements in Massachusetts states that:

Persons shall be eligible to be foster parents when it can be determined that they are capable of promoting the healthy growth and development of foster children who may be placed in their homes and capable of fulfilling the responsibilities of foster parenting. (1973)

Implicitly, throughout the literature, however, is the notion that foster placement is a temporary measure, unlike adoption which is a permanent placement. The "real goal" is ultimately reuniting children with their legal parents (which are defined as those persons who by giving birth to a child or having been decreed through adoption as being the parents are the legal parents).

A study by Maas and Engler (1959) suggests that the average number of placements for a child in foster care is between two and three. Ambinder (1965), in another study, found that the average thirteen year old foster child has had four or five placements. Gruber's (1973) study of foster care in Massachusetts found that 83% of the children in foster care have never been returned to their legal parents even for a trial period. Even though foster care is looked on as a temporary measure, the average length of stay for a foster child in Massachusetts has been more than five years. The

most obvious indications then of foster care difficulties, are the many placements and the long length of stay in temporary placement.

There are several areas of entry into the question of why foster care is in need of attention: the child, the legal parent, the foster parents, the placing agency and the legal system. Any one of these areas, or more likely a combination of them, could present problems leading to unsuccessful foster placements.

Problems in Placement

The child. There have been a limited number of studies dealing with children and his/her effect on foster placement. There are a number of studies, mostly longitudinal, on the effect of foster placement on a given child. The major assumption that seems to arise implicitly throughout the literature is that a child needs a family.

There seems to be a definite association between the maladjustment of the child and an unsuccessful placement. Over half of the changes in placement were attributed to the child's previous rejections (Trasler, 1955). The amount of time in residential care during the first three years of life was significantly related to breakdown. The younger a child was at the time of the initial placement, younger than three and not older than seven, the better chance there was of a stable, successful foster relationship. Conversely, the

older the child was when he/she was separated from his/her legal family, the less chance there was of successful fostering.

Trasler (1955) suggests several areas of research that could be undertaken. One is the effects of separation, particularly on the older child. Another might be a statistical examination of aspects of placements in particular, age at placement. A third area of investigation could be the emotional problems of the foster child during adolescence, in view of the increased risk of unsuccessful placement at that time.

The child's impact on the foster placement process is quite complicated. The child's emotional make-up and history has a decided effect on success of establishing a psychological relationship with an adult. Unfortunately, social service agencies have no control over the children that they must serve. The child's role in foster placement remains as a fixed variable.

The legal parent. In discussing the effect that the legal parents may have on foster placement breakdown, it appears that it is not these parents themselves, but the ambiguous role that has been defined for them by the legal and social system that has had a detrimental effect. Corrective measures could be taken, perhaps beginning with a contract idea as Gruber (1973) has suggested, clarifying the

rights and responsibilities of a parent who has a child in foster care.

This researcher recognizes the need for further legal clarification, but a more immediate concern to social agencies selecting the best foster home is to identify the foster families adaptability to the ambiguous situation and still continue to provide a stable and healthy home for the foster child.

The legal system. It might be helpful to give an example of the dilemma the courts have found themselves in, with regard to the placement of a particular child, and how it has been resolved based on the psychological needs of the child.

Painter v. Bannister 140 N.W. 2d 152 (Iowa 1966) is an interesting celebrated case in point. There, in a habeas corpus action, a biological father sought to regain the custody of his seven year old son, whom he had left with the child's maternal grandparents (following his wife's death in an automobile accident two and one half years earlier). The household of the grandparents was described as "stable, dependable, conventional, middle-class, mid-west" and that of the biological parent as "unconventional, unstable, arty, bohemian, and probably intellectually stimulating." "It is not our prerogative," the appellate court asserted, "to determine custody upon our choice of one of two ways of life within normal and proper limits and we will not do so." It concurred with the trial judge's finding that both parties were proper and fit to serve as parents. While acknowledging a preference in law for the biological parent, the court weighed more heavily on the child's welfare and concluded that the existing psychological parent-child relationship should not be disturbed.

Mark has established a father-son relationship with (the grandfather) which he apparently had never had with his natural father. He is happy, well-adjusted and progressing nicely in his development. We do not believe it is for Mark's best interest to take him

out of this stable atmosphere in the face of warnings of dire consequences from an eminent child psychologist and send him to an uncertain future in his father's home. Regardless of our appreciation of the father's love for his child and his desire to have him with him, we do not believe we have the moral right to dabble with this child's future . . ." (Goldstein, Freud and Solnit, 1973, p. 124)

This case was resolved because of the court's decision to focus on the placement having the least detrimental effect on the child. The job of the court would be made more simple in custody cases if this principle were consistently followed. There would be no need to prove the negligence or the incompetencies of one party compared to another. An effort would be made to decide which adult has the greatest probability of being or becoming the psychological parent of the child. The courts have not always ruled in favor of the legal parent but have recognized characteristics which can lead to healthy family functioning and adaptability in foster homes (Goldstein, Freud and Solnit, 1973).

The placing agency. The placing agency can be defined as any agency, public or private, that is licensed by the state to place children in another home. Such agencies vary from large welfare sponsored agencies to small residential facilities that find foster homes for the children in their care. The responsibility for the success of a foster placement ultimately rests with the agency and its criteria of what an adaptable functioning family is. It defines policy, hires the workers and assigns them to foster families that have been selected by the agency.

Much has been written concerning the responsibility of such agencies. Any reform in the field of foster care must depend on the cooperation of these agencies. The instruments that may be developed would have to be relevant to the attitudes and aptitudes of the social workers. These social workers either implicitly or explicitly do determine within certain limits what is an adaptable and healthy functioning family. Clues as to how this might be reliably measured through a questionnaire will be reviewed in Chapter II.

Hypothesis

This study attempts to provide information that may help to answer questions concerning the identification and selection of healthy functioning foster families. The characteristics of the families' adaptability to the integration of a foster child will appear to be an important area requiring further investigation. The research questions relating to the operationalization of adaptability are stated in the null forms as follows.

1. There will be no significant correlation between the total raw score on the Family Adaptability Questionnaire and the worker's mean rating for that family.
2. No individual subsection on the Family Adaptability Questionnaire will demonstrate a significant difference when statistically compared with the total score.

3. The High, Low and Reference groups as identified by social workers' ratings will not differ in their subscale scores.

Summary

The purpose of this study is to describe the constructs of adaptability as a measure of family functioning and as an aid in the selection of foster families. This study will generate more hypotheses than it will answer. Scientific tools are not presently available to measure family adaptability in this situation. This study will be an initial attempt to develop constructs and to apply them to a practical situation: selection of foster families. Hopefully this project will stimulate further research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter is to review the literature describing the characteristics of a successful foster home, including such factors as motivation, demographic and personality characteristics, social workers' perceptions and ideals, and matching of children to foster parents on certain criteria. The concept of the family operating as a system and the construct of adaptability as operationalized through the subsections of the Family Adaptability Questionnaire will be discussed.

A survey of the literature on foster families over the past thirty-five years (Aldous and Dahl, 1974; Aldous and Rueben, 1965; Dinnage and Pringle, 1967; Olson and Dahl, 1975) has disclosed little information about the foster family's mechanisms for successfully adapting to the inclusion of an additional member. Journal articles and the books written in the field of foster care have been concerned almost exclusively with four general areas in regard to foster parents; their role, their selection, their motives, and the characteristics of successful foster parenting.

Motives

Babcock (1964), Colvin (1962), Fanshel (1961, 1966), Kinter and Otto (1964), Rice (1968), Taylor and Star (1967) have written about matching a particular child with a

particular child with a particular family based on the needs of the child and the motives of the foster parents. The underlying assumption has been that there is a correlation between motives and adequacy as a foster parent. There have been attempts for the last fifteen years to isolate those "good" motives. Motives in this particular situation are those reasons that a family may give for wanting a foster child. What may be more important, however, are not the stated motives, but an understanding of how those motives may be expressed in a foster parent-child relationship.

Before beginning to discuss specific findings, there are a few points that have been made concerning the expressive abilities of foster parents. Hutchinson (1943) suggested that most foster parents do not ask themselves questions about motivation or why they want a foster child. Persons who become foster parents are, on the whole, much less verbally expressive than the rest of the general population. For example, in one study, families were asked to list family strengths. Kinter and Otto (1964) found that both the successful and unsuccessful foster parents had difficulty thinking of themselves or their families in those terms. Assessing motives by asking foster parents directly is a difficult task.

Etri (1959) studied the motives of foster parents judged to be successful and unsuccessful by an agency. The sample consisted of twenty of the most successful foster families

and twenty of the least successful from a caseload of 477. Successful foster parents gave fuller responses than unsuccessful foster parents about motivation. Their responses tended to be child centered. Those judged to be more adequate used words like "love," "child," and "I" more frequently. Colvin and Fanshel (1961) found that the least adequate parents used the motivation of undoing the damage done to the child by previous parenting. Kinter and Otto (1964) also suggested that adequate foster parents used the word "love" more.

Babcock (1964) in her analysis of the psychodynamics of foster parents, suggested several important distinctions about motivations. Foster parents of young children and infants achieved a more "private kind of satisfaction" than the parents of older children. Foster parents of older children tended to stress the social significance of fostering as a motivation.

Matching

Fanshel (1961), rather than studying the motivations per se, studied the specific abilities and preferences of foster parents with given characteristics. His conclusions agreed very much with Babcock's (1964) in that foster parents of babies stressed the enjoyment they got out of their work, whereas foster parents of older children stressed the social value. Fanshel (1961) believes that there are types of

motivations which are more productive when matched with a particular child. For example, a person who expresses self-gratification as a motive for being a foster parent would do much better with an infant than an older child.

The rationale(s) for matching a child with a particular foster family is based on a mixture of practicality and some unproven assumptions (Radinsky, Freed and Rubenstein, 1963). It seems advisable to have as a resource a variety of available homes. Matching would tend to insure appropriate and relevant interactions between a child and a foster family. Sharp clashes in living standards would be avoided and there would be some continuity between foster and legal parents' expectations regarding discipline. As Taylor and Starr (1967) have suggested, continuity seems to be one of the strongest arguments in statements about matching, although certainly not the only one. Matching based on the assumption of continuity, however, tends to miss one of the most important functions of foster home care, which is, removing the child from a detrimental home situation. To believe that there ought to be a continuity between these two homes could be a great injustice to the child.

The most appropriate type of matching seems to be in matching the strengths and weaknesses of the foster parent to the child's. Wagner (1962) and Kresh (1953) suggest that one look at the previous record of the parent. Wagner suggests that foster parent selection is not that different a task

than that of an industrial psychologist selecting the best person for the job. One would look at the past work experience, in this case, how well the foster parents did with their own children. Kresh (1965) suggests looking at the adjustment of the foster parents' own children as an indication of how well adjusted the foster parents themselves are.

At best, matching is going to require an understanding of the child's social and emotional needs. Does the child need a lot of coddling, or does he need to be left alone? What are the particular vulnerable areas that a family would need to be sensitive to? Babcock suggests that an understanding of the foster parents' emotional make-up and their vulnerable areas in relation to a particular child must also be considered.

Kinter and Otto (1964) write about a placement based on complementary needs. This seems to make the most practical sense. It doesn't seem to be enough to talk about matching and complementary needs without discussing which characteristics these writers are referring to when they speak about successful and unsuccessful foster parenting.

Characteristics of Successful Foster Parenting

There are many similarities among studies with regard to successful foster parenting. Baldin (1949), using the Fels Parent Rating Scale, reported that acceptance of the child by the foster family was seen as important for success.

Successful foster parents found contact with the child rewarding. They were also able to appreciate the child's unique personality. Baldwin found that successful foster parents used intellectual objectivity rather than emotional subjectivity in viewing the child. Furthermore, the controls that a parent used and found that unsuccessful foster parents used controls that were either restrictive and coercive, or lax and ineffectual.

Fanshel (1961) found correlations between the Parent Attitude Rating Scale (PARI) and his own scales: The Anomie scale, which measures a cynical and pessimistic attitude, and the Benefactress scale which indicates a tendency to believe that foster parents are morally superior to other people. When used together, these scales tended to cluster and were indicative of less adequate foster parents. Fanshel (1961) also found that the workers' global assessment of a foster family correlated significantly with the PARI.

Wolins (1967) found that a family had a good chance of success as a foster family if they had enough of the following characteristics: the father regards the children as individuals; a mother is farm-reared, not too ambitious, possessive or self-sacrificing; both parents are flexible in the notion of means and pursuits of goals; the couple already has several of their own children. Additionally, the parents ought to be reasonably well educated and less than 45 years of age, Wolins (1967) said that these characteristics do

predict and discriminate between superior and inferior homes.

Most of the studies reviewed have focused either on the mother or the father, but rarely on their interactions as an indicator of success as a foster parent. There has been little written about how these people communicate with each other or with their own children. Kinter and Otto (1964) suggest looking at family strengths. They began by asking accepted and rejected applicants to list their perceptions of family strengths. The strengths held by accepted families were: 1) ability to deal with stressful situations; 2) good relations between parents; 3) a real interest in children; 4) greater evidence of love in family relationships; 5) greater consensus between husband and wife's responses on their own list; 6) intra-family relationships are more meaningful; and 7) used the word "love" more. The rejected families used words like "doing things together" as a response.

Social Worker's Perceptions of Foster Families

Foster parent selection is primarily based on the workers' perceptions of a family. These perceptions are based on an ideal image of the foster parents' role. Wolins (1967) has written on the ambiguity of the role of foster parents. His lengthy study included questioning case-workers, foster parents and neighbors of foster parents about how they saw the role of foster parents. The case-workers themselves were

quite ambivalent about how they perceived the foster parent role. One-third of the workers reported that they saw foster parents in a role similar to that of natural parents; one-third saw the role as being unique and without a valid comparable role; and the remaining third viewed foster parents in a role similar to relatives or paid staff. Foster parents, on the other hand, were quite clear on how they perceived their roles. Seventy-seven per cent of the foster parents saw themselves as the natural parents and nineteen per cent said that they were similar to relatives. The neighbors of foster parents responded very similarly to the foster parents in their perceptions of the foster parent role.

There are several implications of this conflict in role definitions. A role represents a consistent pattern of behavior. It is derived from the values and expectations that one has about the role. Inconsistencies occur when an individual is assuming a role about which there are conflicting values and expectations. As had been discussed previously, there are many conflicts over the rights of the legal parent versus the rights of the foster parents. Another area of conflict is between the agency and the foster parents. There are a great many instances when there is a difference of opinion about when the agency ought to be consulted. The foster parents, who see their role as that of the natural parents are going to be reluctant to contact the agency over most decisions about the child. The agency on the other

hand, which sees the role of foster parents as differing from the natural parent role, will expect some consultation from foster parents about the child.

Radinsky, Freed and Rubenstein (1963) say that selection is based on the workers' perceptions of the family. More specifically, selection is based on the worker's perceptions about the family's underlying feelings for children. Wolins (1967) conducted an investigation into the workers' perceptions. He first asked the worker to fill out questionnaires as if they were ideal foster parents. He then had the workers fill out the same questionnaire as they thought the best family on their caseload would. He found that the workers tended to evaluate foster families according to their ideal of what a foster family ought to be. The workers' image matched very closely with their own socio-economic background and value system. He found that their images were very clear, predictable, consistent individually and within and among agencies. Wolins (1967) then administered the same questionnaire to the superior families recommended by the agency. They did not answer in the way in which the social workers suggested that an ideal family would answer. The gap between the ideal and the real shows either that the workers did not know these families well, even though they believed they could tell that a family was good, or that they selected families even if they lacked the attributes that the worker sought.

Most of the research was concerned with the ex-post-facto study of foster parents. Once families had already been selected there are a number of descriptive studies on their effectiveness. Most of the studies reviewed were concerned with motives, matching and performance.

In the earlier period of foster home selection, the emphasis was on finding the most normal home available. The assumption that the normal home made the best foster home has come under a considerable amount of attack. Moore (1962) criticized the whole concept of a "healthy" family as being too subjective. The question is: "Does what we perceive as a healthy family necessarily make the best type of home for foster children?" The concept of a healthy family in most literature is the middle-class family in both values and life style (Fanshel, 1961; Etri, 1959 and Kadushin, 1971). The term "healthy" could be utilized on a less subjective level if one were to describe the family as a functional system, adapting to new situations and changes.

The Family as a System

In reviewing 50 books and articles covering the period from 1940 through 1975 about foster parents, it becomes apparent that there is a substantial amount of descriptive observation about demographic characteristics, but not nearly as much on personality characteristics, and/or family as a system.

Foster families as defined in this project do not differ systematically or systemically from natural families except that they have volunteered to be a surrogate family for a child. This attitude differs substantially from previous discussions of foster families. As Dinnage and Pringle (1966) observed in their extensive review of the literature about foster care, the emphasis has been on studying the differences between foster families and natural families. There have been a few exceptions within the literature on foster families. Lawder (1964) feels that by assessing family dynamics one might get a better understanding of the motives of the foster parents. She is concerned about how healthy the family is, and of particular interest, how much stress the family can take. Pollak (1967) suggests using family therapist to assess motives and the psychodynamics of foster families. These writer's views appeared to be in the minority. The idea of selecting healthy families has not been a popular one. Lawder (1964) suggests two plausible reasons for this. First, is that the social workers fear that if the family is looked at too closely, a highly valued placement might be lost. Second, she reports that social workers lack the skills necessary to assess families adequately. A productive approach to the study of families and foster families in particular would entail looking at the structure and functions of the family system (Ackerman, 1958; Bloch, 1973;

Bowen, 1966; Haley, 1971; Jackson, 1957; Minuchin, 1974; Satir, 1964).

A family operates as a system, having many of the same properties that are attributable to any system, biological or social (Farber, 1964; Heiss, 1968; Kirkpatrick, 1963; Lidz, 1961; Nye and Berardo, 1966; Parsons and Bales, 1955). A system's structure is to maintain its boundaries, and its function is to seek equilibrium by maintaining those boundaries (Zelditch in Parson and Bales, 1955). Any change of state within the system is followed by attempts to restore the equilibrium or homeostatic balance. As such, all families go through natural transitional states in which they should adapt and accommodate to the new situation. Such events include the birth of a child, a new job, loss of a parent, children leaving home or a child starting kindergarten. This transitional period can be thought of as a period of stress for the family. The success with which a family adapts to these new situations, or stresses, is a strong indication of the adaptability of the family system.

A foster family is a family system, having as its goal the maintenance and continuity of the family. A family seeks to maintain its boundaries. A foster family, though, extends its boundaries to include new members. In many instances it does this without upsetting the equilibrium of the family structure for any length of time. It is successful at adapting to a new and stressful situation. It is able to do this,

presumably, the same way that any family adapts to new situations; by restructuring the boundaries within the family. Boundaries, in this paper, are the personal space, both psychological and physical that are used to maintain the structure of the family.

There are, ideally, boundaries around the various sub-systems that form a family unit. Examples of such would be the parental sub-system, the spouse sub-system or the sibling sub-system. The inclusion of a foster child would necessitate the restructuring of the sibling sub-system to allow another child into that group, and also some restructuring of the parental sub-system to facilitate the healthy parenting of a new child. The restructuring that is done is necessary to minimize the stress that will naturally occur by the inclusion of a new member (Lidz, 1961; Minuchin, 1974).

Much discussion in the literature has focused on "why" a family extends its boundaries to take in a foster child, although the terms boundaries and restructuring are not used. Rather the term used is motivation. Whether a family can successfully take in a child without upsetting its equilibrium for any length of time and whether the experience continues to be a reinforcing event, may depend primarily on the family's ability to extend its boundaries and restructure its interior. These factors are important in the development of the construct of adaptability in this project. The specific family strengths suggested by Kinter and Otto (1964) were

also considered in the conceptualization of family adaptability. Those included were: 1) ability to deal with stressful situations; 2) good relations between parents; 3) greater consensus between husband's and wife's responses on their own list of family strengths; and 6) meaningful intra-family relationships.

Summary

This review of the literature disclosed that family adaptability has not been a concept applied to the selection criteria for foster families. Other concepts, such as motivation, demographic and personality characteristics, matching children to specific families and social workers' perceptions have been studied in relation to their efficiency in selecting good foster homes. Several authors have alluded to studying the foster family's mechanism for adapting to new situations (Babcock, 1964; Kinter and Otto, 1964; Kresh, 1953; Lawder, 1964; Pollack, 1967). These have been developed into constructs that were operationalized in the development of a questionnaire. This questionnaire and the methods used in this study will be described in Chapter III.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURE AND ORGANIZATION

Introduction

This study is directly concerned with adopting the constructs of adaptability, as a measure of family functioning, as an aid in the selection of foster families. The Family Adaptability Questionnaire was developed to operationalize the concept of adaptability. This questionnaire was used to compare a particular family's written response with the social workers' rating of the family as a foster care placement. The sub-sections of the instrument will be statistically compared with the total raw score. Additionally, the highest rated group of families (determined by the scale), will be compared to the families who scored in the lowest third or were not selected.

Instrument

An extensive search of the literature on family measurements did not reveal a scale that would be suitable in this project to measure family adaptability. A total of 12 scales were reviewed (Aldous and Hill, 1967; Glick and Haley, 1971; Herbst, 1959; Strauss, 1964). Of particular value was the questionnaire developed by Kieran and Tallman (1971).

Personal contact with Professor Murray Strauss in February of 1975 at the University of New Hampshire confirmed that

there have been no scales developed since his review of family measurements in 1964 that would be appropriate for this project.

The instrument needed would have to incorporate several contributing factors. These included the constructs of family adaptability, flexibility of social roles within the family, spouse agreement on involvement in family decision making, family cohesion and unity, previous experience with a stressful experience and a successful recovery from it. It was necessary that the scale be administered with a minimal amount of difficulty for both the respondent and the interviewer. The questions would have to be closed rather than open to facilitate treatment of data and to increase the ease of scoring for others who may wish to use the scale at a later time.

The questionnaire as it was developed for this study, was based largely on the conceptual definitions developed by Angell (1936). They were: consensus of the spouses on agreement of involvement in family decisions, flexibility of social roles within the family, family cohesion and participation in family activities. Cavan (1939) used these four concepts to evaluate families during and after periods of severe stress. Hill (1949) later studied the effect that separation and reunion had on families during World War II. His scale used two concepts defined by Angell (1936), adaptability and integration. By the former, Angell meant the

bonds of coherence and unity running through family life, of which common interests, affection and a sense of economic interdependence are perhaps the most important. Adaptability as used by Angell (1936) and Cavan (1939) and as used here, refers to the family's flexibility as a unit in meeting obstacles and difficulties, the families readiness to adjust to changed situations, and its habits of collective decision-making and control.

The conceptual definitions were quite useful for this study. They included concepts that assessed how cohesive the parental sub-system was, an important indicator of an adaptable family. The concept of flexibility of social roles was chosen as an indicator of the rigidity/flexibility of a family system, to what extent can parents interchange roles with each other. Family cohesion and unity was included as an important factor in determining how each spouse perceived his/her responsibility towards the family. The construct of participation in family activities as a construct in determining family adaptability was included to assess the magnitude of family closeness.

Interviews with several foster families who had worked for the agency and for various reasons withdrew provided descriptive information as to how successful and unsuccessful foster families functioned. The information collected from these structured interviews was used to clarify the constructs used for this project. Two families were selected

because they appeared to represent the extremes of successful and unsuccessful foster families.

There was much more descriptive information on Family A. They were more articulate about themselves as individuals and as a family than any other family interviewed.

Family A had briefly been used as a foster placement for an adolescent boy. They transferred to another agency after after deciding to become a long term placement for the boy. At the time of the interview they had incorporated into their family the five siblings of the boy ranging in age from eight to seventeen. The nuclear family consisted of a mother and father in their early thirties and two children, a girl seven and a boy three. The mother was a high school graduate who had worked as a hairdresser before the children were born. The father had dropped out of school in the 10th grade and was self employed as a heater repairman.

Family B had briefly been foster parents for an adolescent boy but quit because they said that the strain was too much on the family. The parents were both in their early thirties and high school graduates. The father was employed at a gas station. They had a two year old boy.

Spouse Agreement

The concept of spouse agreement on involvement in family decisions as an indicator of the cohesiveness of the parental sub-system was explored with these two families. Family A

was very explicit that they sometimes disagreed in the areas of child rearing, and leisure time activities. The wife felt that her husband was too stern in some ways. He would rather a child have an experience then explaining the experience and thereby prevent disappointment or failure. He saw her as protective and somewhat puritanical. This couple was able throughout this interview to be very articulate about themselves and each other. What appeared to make them such an adaptable couple and family was their willingness and even eagerness to share their differences and continue to respect each others competencies. Although Family A did disagree about their style of child rearing, for example, they appreciated the others input and felt that he or she wanted these differences to balance out their own approach.

An anecdote is mentioned here to illustrate Family A's method of negotiating and resolving conflict which provides an example of spouse agreement on involvement in family decisions. The mother was talking about her new found interest in religion. She had begun to attend Bible class and was reading the Bible daily. The father expressed some annoyance about this, he was not religious. She stated the beneficial and detrimental aspects of Bible class in relation to herself and to her family. She said that she had found much comfort in it and had gained some important friendships from the class. She also felt that it was interfering with her own perceived duties as a wife and mother by taking time away

from playing with her children or talking with her husband. They talked at length during the interview about these issues. She finally said that God could best be served by her being a good person and fulfilling the responsibilities that she had chosen. She resolved it by deciding that she would study the Bible only when it would not interfere with these other responsibilities. Her husband supported her in wanting her to continue with this new group of friends and offered to babysit on the night she went out.

Family B said that they did not disagree on their involvement on family decisions. It was evident in talking to them and watching them interact that there were major disagreements. There were several instances that occurred during the interview at their home which exemplified this. The father came downstairs expecting lunch, the mother thought that he was outside fixing something for her and hadn't prepared anything. She bickered about his not fixing something for her and he was upset about not being fed. Meanwhile their child was playing unsupervised near some sharp tools. Each was expecting the other to have been watching him and neither was concerned with the potential danger.

Flexibility of Social Roles

In observing and discussing with each family flexibility of social roles in the family, the differences were striking. In both families there were very prescribed roles for mother/

father, husband/wife. In family A the wife stated her expectations of what a husband and father should do, namely be the bread winner and make the major decisions concerning finances. He agreed with these expectations and was equally as clear as to what he thought her role should be. She had the major responsibilities for the house and the children. He also felt a great responsibility towards the rearing of the children. They believed that each had something special to give to the children that differed from the other.

Each had specific tasks around the house based on competencies and traditional sex roles. They both felt that he was better with the adolescent boy and she with the adolescent girl.

In Family B the roles were also clearly defined, but they were not followed through on. They both saw the husband as the sole wage earner, but he had had many jobs and was not performing adequately in his present position. Her responsibility was the maintenance of the house and care of the child, neither of which she did very well. They did not seem to trust that the other would do his or her share, but neither were they willing to help the other out. Their roles were not based so much on competencies as fixed social expectations with little flexibility for change.

Family Cohesion

The concept of flexibility of social roles joins well with the third concept explored with this project; family cohesion and unity, how each spouse perceived his or her responsibility towards the family. Family A presented an example of this during the interview. The wife reported that she was concerned about mothers who went to work leaving their children in someone else's care. She said that she would like to work someday, perhaps with the natural parents of foster children as a way of getting families back together. She felt that her responsibility was to her own family first. Before she had their first child she said that she had made a careful decision that this is what she wanted to do. Her husband interrupted and said that if she would feel better about herself he would want her to go to school to get the training that she needed to do this type of work. He then made some suggestions about what he could do without so that they could afford to do this. She declined and said that there would be plenty of time for her to indulge herself after the youngest child went to school. As has been previously mentioned, the roles were very explicit in this family and the responsibility for carrying out the tasks was assumed. They were willing and even anxious to offer support and help to the other when needed.

Both mother and father in Family A felt that responsibility is taught. They had opened a small savings account

for the two oldest foster children believing that when they did go on their own they would have an understanding of saving money and would be more responsible adults. An incident happened during the interview which illustrates this concern about responsibility. About 10:00 p.m. the sixteen year old girl called from a friends house to say that she was going to a party somewhere else. She then asked her foster father if she might have a drink at the party. He responded that since he figured she had had one drink anyway she could have one more. He got off the phone and explained that he wanted to teach her to be a responsible adult. He wanted her to learn to control her drinking and be able to set her own limits so that when she was eighteen and could drink legally she would know what her limits were. In the meantime he felt responsible in setting limits for her and at the same time respecting her own need to be part of a peer group.

In Family B neither spouse seemed willing to assume responsibility for much of anything. Interestingly enough the social workers at the agency said that this was one reason why they would not use them as a foster placement again. Neither parent wanted the responsibility of setting limits on the adolescent boy placed with them. He was often out of their house until very late and was arrested several times while living with them. During the interview neither of them took responsibility for the toddler and then became angry at the other because they thought that the other was watching him.

Participation in Family Activities

The fourth concept used to study family adaptability was participation in family activities. Family A did many activities together. Their front yard was crowded with a house trailer, a camper and a motor boat. Each family member had his or her own interest also, including the youngest children. The parents felt that when a family activity was planned everyone was expected to go. If a family emergency occurred it was expected that everyone would cancel his or her plans.

Family B said that they did activities together, but they gave the appearance of being too disorganized to plan an activity.

The construction of these questionnaires consisted of open-ended questions that would have been difficult to code and to obtain reliable data from. Kieran and Tallman, (1971) developed a three dimensional instrument that measured decision making and cohesion within the marital couple. Their questions, upon which the Family Adaptability Questionnaire is largely based, were also open ended in format and the individual responses were coded and analyzed.

The instrument that was developed for this project consisted of 27 statements. The statements selected were drawn from the constructs that were used to define adaptability. The selected indicators were grouped into five sub-sections:

1. Spouse Agreement on Involvement in Family Decisions
 - a) what kind of car to buy
 - b) when dinner is served
 - c) where to go on vacations
 - d) what evening T.V. show to watch
 - e) how to discipline the children
 - f) when to discipline the children
 - g) how money is handled
 - h) moving the furniture around
 - i) activities with your in-laws
 - j) setting bedtime hours for the children
2. Flexibility of Social Roles Within the Family
 - a) refinishing furniture
 - b) taking care of a sick child
 - c) fixing small things around the house
 - d) preparing meals
 - e) getting the car repaired
3. Family Cohesion and Unity
 - a) everyone does his/her share in the family
 - b) things just seem to get done around the house without too much planning
 - c) someone is usually willing to take on additional responsibilities
 - d) closeness of family relationships
4. Family Activities
 - a) shopping
 - b) school events
 - c) visiting relatives
 - d) movies
 - e) vacations
5. Previous Experience with Stressful Situations
 - a) recovery from stressful situations

The respondents answered the statements using a seven point Likert scale: (1) strongly agree through (7) strongly disagree. Husband and wife answered the questions independently of each other. This was done to insure that consensus

of responses was not due to collusion during the interview. The questionnaire may be found in Appendix A.

Subjects

The subjects were selected from a small private social work agency. The agency, located in a medium sized New England city, specializes in short term foster care. They are not involved with adoption placements or any of the other services that are typically provided by a public social service agency. The agency is staffed largely by persons under 30 years of age who are college graduates, but not necessarily M.S.W.'s. Eighty per cent of the children served are adolescents, a majority of whom are court referrals. These foster placements are used as an alternative to detention. The agency also serves children and young people who need emergency shelter for a short period of time, up to sixty days.

The 39 families used for this study were selected from a roster of 70 active currently functioning foster families who met the following criteria: 1) they were an intact, two parent family; 2) they had had at least one child assigned to them by this agency; 3) at least two social workers were familiar enough with them to assign them a rating; and 4) they voluntarily agreed to be part of this research project. Thirty families did not meet the criteria. A letter was mailed to each of the 39 families selected notifying them of

the project and asking for their cooperation.

Seven additional families who applied to be foster families and were not selected were also administered the questionnaire as a reference group.

Ratings of the Families by the Social Workers

Five social workers at the agency were asked to rate the families to be used for this study using a four step procedure. They did this independently of each other.

Step 1.

The names of all the families on the current active roster (n=70) were placed on index cards. The worker was asked to select those families that he/she knew well enough to give an informed judgment of how well these families were functioning.

Step 2.

The social worker was asked to give a general rating of how well he/she thought the family was functioning within the foster parent role, using the following five point scale:

- 5 - functioning very adequately
- 4 - functioning above average
- 3 - functioning adequately
- 2 - functioning below average
- 1 - functioning inadequately

Step 3.

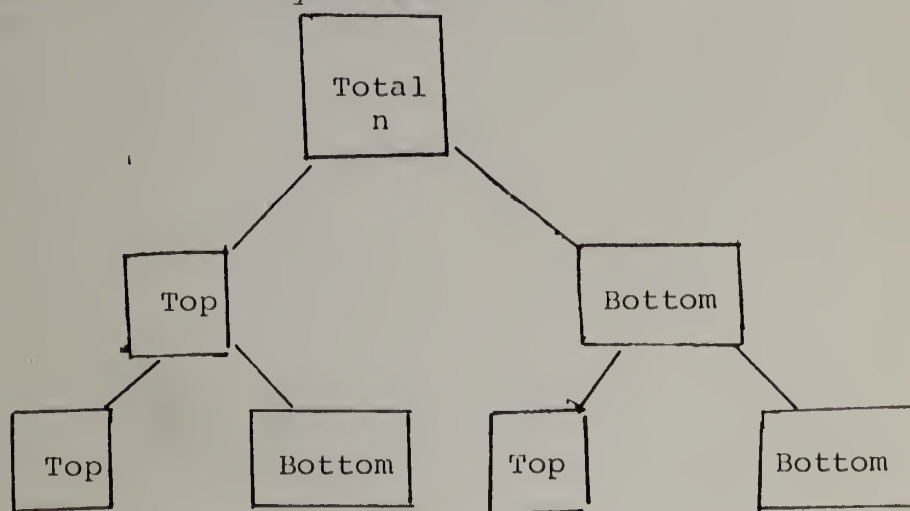
The social worker gave a confidence rating to his/her general rating of how certain he/she was of his/her

judgment using a three point scale:

- 3 - very certain of their rating
- 2 - somewhat certain of their rating
- 1 - uncertain of rating

Step 4.

A Q-sort technique was used for a further rating. The social worker was asked to divide the families into two equal groups. One group being better foster families when compared to the other group. These two groups were further divided into two equal groups, again a top and a bottom group. The results of this were four groups approximately equal in size, which represented a fairly accurate estimation of the workers ratings of the families with who they were familiar:



A mean rating was determined for each family by summing the general rating and the Q-sort determined rating and dividing by the number of workers who rated the family. For example a high rated family would have a minimal rating of between 7.2 - 9 and a low rated family between 1 - 5.3.

Collection of the Data

The data were collected through standardized interviews. The interviews were conducted by three female and two male undergraduates from local colleges. The interviewers were not aware of the family ratings by the agency's staff. None had had any previous contact with the agency. They were involved in a five hour training program conducted by this researcher, which consisted of an overview of the research project and instructions on administering the questionnaire. Role play was used to practice introducing the family to the project and the interview. The interviewers were rehearsed as to what questions might arise and possible responses that they could make. A careful description of how the questionnaire was to be administered including the emphasis that the husband and wife were to answer the questions separately. Any questions that the family had about the study were to be answered after completion of the questionnaire.

Each interviewer was responsible for contacting the eight families randomly assigned to interview. The interviewers scheduled their own times to do the interview at the family's home. These usually took place in the evening or on the weekend at the family's convenience.

During the actual interview, the mother and father were asked to respond to the thirty-one statements by marking their own copy. The interview was approximately one hour in length. Ample time was allowed for the interviewer to

respond to the thirty-one statements by marking their own copy. The interview was approximately one hour in length. Ample time was allowed for the interviewer to respond to concerns that the family may have had about the treatment of the data, confidentiality and the purpose of the project. The 46 questionnaires were completed including 39 active foster parents and seven parents not selected. The data took approximately eight weeks to collect.

Analysis of the Data

The data were collected during the early part of 1975. The social workers' ratings were compiled and tabulated on a master sheet. The items on the questionnaire were placed by hand on optical scanning sheets and then transferred to computer cards. Processing was partially done with a revised version of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (Nie, Bent and Hull, 1975) at the University of Massachusetts and the University of Delaware Computer Center. A number of different procedures were utilized. Frequencies and percentages were calculated for items concerning demographic information. A t-test was used to compare husband and wife's responses on individual items.

A simple randomized analysis of variance design was used to test the significance of mean differences among the subsections of the instrument and the different sub-groups: the high rated foster families, the low-rated foster families and

the non-selected families. To compute the F value by which the null hypothesis sub-group mean differences were tested, the following quantities were calculated: 1) the total, within, and between the sum of squares, 2) the within and between degrees of freedom, 3) the within and between mean squares after which, 4) the within mean squares were divided into the between mean square. The F value was interpreted for statistical significance at the .05 level from Table F (reproduced from Snedecor's Statistical Methods, 1937) in Guilford's Fundamental Statistics in Psychology and Education (1956).

A correlation matrix was developed to correlate the relationships between the social workers' ratings and total Family Adaptability Questionnaire scores.

Summary

A review of the literature on family measurements did not reveal a scale that would be suitable for this project. The constructs of adaptability were operationalized into a questionnaire that would aid in the selection of foster families. The five major sub-sections were: spouse agreement on involvement in family decisions, flexibility of social roles within the family, family cohesion and unity, family activities, and previous experience with stressful situations.

The subjects participating in the project consisted of 39 active foster families on the roster of a private social

service agency, and seven families who applied and were not selected to become foster families. Five social workers rated the families using a four step procedure. The questionnaire developed for this study was given to the foster families by five trained volunteers.

Analysis of variance was the statistical technique employed for analyzing the data. There were three hypotheses tested to determine whether there was a statistical difference among the families who were rated in the high group, the low group and families not selected, using their mean responses to the sub-sections of the questionnaires.

C H A P T E R I V

RESULTS

The focus of this study was to adopt the constructs of adaptability, as a measure of family functioning, as an aid in the selection of foster families. This was done by 1) developing the Family Adaptability Questionnaire; 2) administering the questionnaire to 39 active foster families and ten families who applied and were not selected; 3) comparing the total Family Adaptability scores to agency ratings of the 39 active families.

The results are presented in three sections: section one, biographic data of the 46 families used in this study; section two, social workers' ratings of the families; section three, comparisons of the three groups in answering the questionnaire.

Section One

Biographic Data on the Families

Thirty-nine active foster families and seven families who applied to become foster parents and were not selected agreed to participate in this study. Several criteria were used to select the 39 families from a total roster of 70: 1) they were an intact, two parent family; 2) they had had at least one child assigned to them by the agency participating in this study; 3) at least two social workers were familiar enough with them to assign them a rating. Seven additional

families who applied and were not selected were used as a reference group.

For the purposes of this study, the biographic information will be presented with the same groupings used for sections two and three of this chapter: a high group, a low group, and a reference group. These first two groups are based on the social workers' ratings of the families. The High group contains the top third of the families or 13, the Low group contains the bottom third of the sample, 13 families. Data on the mothers and fathers will be presented separately when indicated.

Ages of the Mothers and Fathers

Approximately 33% of the mothers sampled were between the ages of 31 and 35. Seventy-eight percent of the mothers were 35 years old or younger. Table 1 provides the specific details concerning the ages of the mothers.

TABLE 1

AGES OF THE MOTHERS IN THE HIGH, LOW AND REFERENCE GROUPS

| | HIGH | | LOW | | REFERENCE | | TOTAL | |
|------------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| 20-25 | 1 | 8 | 3 | 23 | 2 | 28 | 6 | 18 |
| 26-30 | 5 | 38 | 3 | 23 | 1 | 14 | 9 | 27 |
| 31-35 | 5 | 38 | 2 | 15 | 3 | 42 | 10 | 33 |
| 36-40 | 1 | 8 | 2 | 15 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 9 |
| 41 or over | <u>1</u> | <u>8</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>23</u> | <u>1</u> | <u>14</u> | <u>5</u> | <u>15</u> |
| Totals | 13 | | 13 | | 7 | | 34 | |

Note: Percentages do not equal 100 because of rounding error.

TABLE 2

AGES OF THE FATHERS IN THE HIGH, LOW AND REFERENCE GROUPS

| AGE | HIGH | | LOW | | REFERENCE | | TOTAL | |
|------------|----------|----|----------|----|-----------|----|----------|----|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| 20-25 | 1 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 14 | 2 | 6 |
| 26-30 | 2 | 15 | 6 | 46 | 2 | 28 | 10 | 30 |
| 31-35 | 7 | 54 | 3 | 23 | 1 | 14 | 11 | 33 |
| 36-40 | 1 | 8 | 1 | 8 | 2 | 28 | 4 | 12 |
| 41 or over | <u>2</u> | 15 | <u>3</u> | 23 | <u>1</u> | 14 | <u>6</u> | 18 |
| Totals | 13 | | 13 | | 7 | | 33 | |

Seventy-two percent of the fathers sampled were thirty-five years of age or less. Within the high group of fathers, 77% were thirty-five years of age or less compared with 69% in the low group. In general the high group contained fathers that were older than the fathers in the low or reference group.

Educational Level of the Mothers and Fathers

The educational levels of the mothers and fathers were determined by the highest level attained, either academically or through a specific job training program beyond high school. As shown in Table 3, 68% of the total mothers had a high school diploma or less. The mothers in the low group were slightly better educated when compared to the high group, thirty-nine percent had some college or more compared

with 30% of the high group. Fewer than 15% of the reference group had more than a high school diploma.

TABLE 3
HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL LEVEL ATTAINED BY THE MOTHERS IN THE
HIGH, LOW AND REFERENCE GROUPS

| EDUCATION | HIGH | | LOW | | REFERENCE | | TOTAL | |
|-----------------------|------|----|-----|----|-----------|----|-------|----|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Less than high school | 1 | 8 | 3 | 23 | 1 | 14 | 5 | 15 |
| High school diploma | 8 | 61 | 5 | 38 | 5 | 71 | 18 | 54 |
| Job training | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Some college | 2 | 15 | 3 | 23 | 1 | 14 | 6 | 18 |
| College grad | 2 | 15 | 1 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 9 |
| Some grad school | 0 | 0 | 1 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 |
| Total | 13 | | 13 | | 7 | | 33 | |

The high and low group fathers had similar educational levels to mothers. Approximately 69% of the fathers had a high school diploma or less. This finding was also true of the reference group. The reference group contained 3 fathers or 42% of their total who had some college, compared with 30-32% of the other two groups of fathers having had some college. Table 4 shows the educational levels of the fathers. There did not seem to be any differences among the three groups regarding educational achievement.

TABLE 4

HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL LEVEL ATTAINED BY THE FATHERS IN THE
HIGH, LOW AND REFERENCE GROUPS

| EDUCATION | HIGH | | LOW | | REFERENCE | | TOTAL | |
|-----------------------|------|----|-----|----|-----------|----|-------|----|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Less than high school | 5 | 38 | 1 | 8 | 1 | 14 | 7 | 21 |
| High school diploma | 4 | 30 | 8 | 61 | 3 | 42 | 15 | 45 |
| Job training | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Some college | 2 | 15 | 3 | 23 | 2 | 28 | 7 | 21 |
| College grad | 2 | 15 | 1 | 8 | 1 | 14 | 4 | 12 |
| Trade School | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Totals | 13 | | 13 | | 7 | | 33 | |

Length of Present Marriage and Times Married

The length of the present marriage for the families in each of the three groups was divided into five categories. Only two couples in the whole sample, one from the high group and one from the low group had been married over 15 years. Seventy-one percent of the families in the reference group had been married for five years or less, compared with 38% and 23% for the high and low groups respectively. Table 5 provides the details relative to the length of marriages. The families that the agency selected to become foster families had been married longer than those not selected.

TABLE 5
LENGTH OF PRESENT MARRIAGE FOR THE HIGH,
LOW AND REFERENCE GROUPS

| LENGTH OF MARRIAGE | HIGH | | LOW | | REFERENCE | | TOTAL | |
|-----------------------|------|----|-----|----|-----------|----|-------|----|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| 0-5 years | 5 | 38 | 3 | 23 | 5 | 71 | 13 | 39 |
| 6-10 years | 5 | 38 | 6 | 46 | 1 | 14 | 12 | 36 |
| 11-15 years | 2 | 15 | 3 | 23 | 1 | 14 | 6 | 18 |
| 16-20 years | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 21 years or more | 1 | 8 | 1 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 6 |
| Total | 13 | | 13 | | 7 | | 33 | |

Table 6 provides the information of how many marriages the couple has had. For a majority of the couples used in this study, 81% was their only marriage. For approximately 15% of the families in this population it was the second or third marriage for either the husband, the wife or both. There did not seem to be a difference among the three groups regarding the number of marriages.

TABLE 6
NUMBER OF TIMES MARRIED FOR THE HIGH, LOW AND REFERENCE GROUPS

| TIMES MARRIED | HIGH | | LOW | | REFERENCE | | TOTAL | |
|-------------------------|------|----|-----|----|-----------|----|-------|----|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Once | 11 | 84 | 11 | 84 | 5 | 71 | 27 | 81 |
| Husband had 3 marriages | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 14 | 1 | 3 |
| Each spouse has had 2 | 1 | 8 | 1 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 6 |
| Wife had 2 marriages | 1 | 8 | 1 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 6 |
| Totals | 13 | | 13 | | 7 | | 33 | |

Number of Previous Foster Placement and the Preferred Age of the Foster Child

A large majority of the high rated foster families have had more than five previous foster children, 91%. Seventy-six percent of the low rated foster families have had more than five previous foster children. One family had had no foster children before the child who was in placement with them during this project. Table 7 presents a breakdown of the number of previous foster children. Table 8 shows the age of the foster child preferred by the family when they originally applied to become a foster family. Fifty-three percent of the high group preferred adolescent aged children in their home. None wanted an infant or pre-school aged child placed with them. Fifteen percent of the low rated families wanted an adolescent as a foster child, and another 15% preferred an infant or pre-schooler. About an equal number of families in the high and low group, 46% and 53% respectively, preferred a school aged child 5-10 years of age. Fifteen percent of the low rated group said that they had no preference.

TABLE 7
NUMBER OF PREVIOUS FOSTER CHILDREN

| NUMBER OF FOSTER CHILDREN | HIGH | | LOW | |
|---------------------------|------|----|-----|----|
| | N | % | N | % |
| 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 8 |
| 1-4 children | 1 | 8 | 2 | 15 |
| 5-10 children | 5 | 38 | 5 | 38 |
| over 10 | 7 | 53 | 5 | 38 |
| Total | 13 | | 13 | |

TABLE 8
PREFERRED AGE OF FOSTER CHILD

| AGE | HIGH | | LOW | |
|----------------------|------|----|-----|----|
| | N | % | N | % |
| Infant or pre-school | 0 | 0 | 2 | 15 |
| 5-10 years old | 6 | 46 | 7 | 53 |
| 11-18 years old | 7 | 53 | 2 | 15 |
| No preference | 0 | 0 | 2 | 15 |
| Total | 13 | | 13 | |

Summary

The biographic information collected on the families used in this project revealed few differences among the three groups of families. The low group of foster fathers were somewhat older than the people in the low or reference groups. There did not appear to be any differences among the three groups regarding educational achievement. The families that the agency selected to become foster parents had been married longer than those they rejected. None of the families in the

high group as compared to families in the low reference groups preferred to have an infant or pre-school aged child placed with them. They preferred to have adolescents and next in preference school aged children. Only a small percentage of the low rated foster families preferred to have an adolescent.

Section Two

Social Workers' Rating of the Families

This section will focus on the ratings of the 39 active foster families by four social workers. These ratings were used as a validity check for the Family Adaptability Questionnaire. The social workers were asked to rate the families using a four step procedure.

For step one, the names of all the families on the current active roster (n=70) were placed on index cards. The social worker was asked to select those families that he/she knew well enough to give an informed judgment of how well these families were functioning in the role of foster parents. The social workers ultimately used their own value system of what they considered a well functioning foster family was. They informally used such criteria as willingness to accept adolescent aged children, consulting with the social workers only in difficult situations, having a favorable attitude to the agency and being able to make transitions easily with a child, including accepting or letting go of a particular child.

In Table 9 the number and percentages of families known to each social worker using the final sample number of 39, as shown. Rater #1 knew 61% of the families, rater #2 knew 71% of the families, rater #3 knew 87% of the families and rater #4 knew 92% of the families used in this sample of active

foster families. The social workers who had been with the agency the longest knew the most families. The social worker who knew only 61% of the families had been involved with the more specialized group care foster homes.

TABLE 9

NUMBER AND PERCENT OF FAMILIES KNOWN TO EACH RATER

| Rater #1 | | Rater #2 | | Rater #3 | | Rater #4 | |
|----------|----|----------|----|----------|----|----------|----|
| N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| 24 | 61 | 28 | 71 | 34 | 87 | 36 | 92 |

Table 10 presents how many social workers were familiar enough with each family to rate them. Eighteen of the families were rated by all four social workers: twelve families were families who were families rated by three social workers and nine families were rated by only two social workers.

TABLE 10

NUMBER AND PERCENT OF RATINGS FOR EACH FAMILY

| | N | % |
|-------------------------|----|----|
| Families with 4 ratings | 18 | 46 |
| Families with 3 ratings | 12 | 30 |
| Families with 2 ratings | 9 | 23 |

Step 2 required the social workers to give a general rating to how well the family was functioning within the foster parent role using the following five point scale:

- 5 - functioning very adequately
- 4 - functioning above average
- 3 - functioning adequately
- 2 - functioning below average
- 1 - functioning inadequately

Table 11 presents how the social workers ratings were distributed across the ratings.

TABLE 11
DISTRIBUTION OF RATINGS OF FOSTER FAMILIES BY
FOUR SOCIAL WORKERS

| GENERAL RATING | Rater #1 | | Rater #2 | | Rater #3 | | Rater #4 | |
|-------------------|----------|----|----------|----|----------|----|----------|----|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 9 | 1 | 3 |
| 2 | 1 | 4 | 4 | 14 | 3 | 9 | 3 | 8 |
| 3 | 5 | 20 | 11 | 39 | 13 | 39 | 7 | 19 |
| 4 | 11 | 45 | 11 | 39 | 12 | 35 | 18 | 50 |
| 5 | 7 | 29 | 2 | 7 | 3 | 9 | 6 | 16 |

For the majority of the families, the social workers rated them as functioning adequately to very adequately. They all had great difficulty in giving a family a rating of 1, or functioning inadequately. They were much more willing to give a more neutral rating of three or four. In general they preferred to think of the families as functioning adequately or above.

The social workers were asked in Step 3 to divide the families into two equal groups, one group being better foster

families when compared to the other group. This "forced" choice made clearer the previous general rating and perhaps modified reluctance to report unfavorably on a family they may have selected and/or worked with. These two groups were further divided into two additional groups, again a top and a bottom group. The results of this were four groups ranked approximately equal in size, which represented the social worker ratings of the families with whom they were familiar. There was rater agreement on 75% of the families in the study, using the criteria of two or more raters agreeing on the quadrant ranking of 29 families. Table 12 describes the breakdown of rater agreement. If only two raters judged a family and they ranked it in the same quadrant, this was considered as 100% rater agreement. When four raters rated a family and only two agreed on the quadrant ranking, this was considered as 50% rater agreement. Regardless of the amount of agreement on ratings, a mean rating was determined for each family.

TABLE 12

PERCENT OF RATER AGREEMENT ON QUADRANT RANKING OF THE FAMILIES

| PERCENT OF AGREEMENT | NUMBER OF FAMILIES |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| 100 | 11 |
| 75 | 2 |
| 50 | 16 |
| 0 | 10 |

The social workers were asked to give a confidence rating to their general rating of the family. This rating, on a scale of 3, 2, 1 (three being high), was used to determine how certain they were of their general rating. An examination of Table 13 reveals that all four social workers tended to be more confident about their extreme ratings. In general, families whom the social workers rated as inadequate were given high confidence ratings. Those families that the social workers gave a general rating of 3, functioning adequately, received the lowest confidence rating of 2.205. There was greater variance in confidence ratings by raters #1 and #2 than by raters #3 and #4.

TABLE 13

MEAN CONFIDENCE RATING OF GENERAL RATING BY FOUR SOCIAL WORKERS

| GENERAL RATING | Rater #1 | | Rater #2 | | Rater #3 | | Rater #4 | |
|-------------------|-----------|----|-----------|----|-----------|----|-----------|----|
| | \bar{x} | N | \bar{x} | N | \bar{x} | N | \bar{x} | N |
| 5 | 2.8 | 7 | 2.5 | 2 | 3.0 | 3 | 2.6 | 6 |
| 4 | 2.09 | 11 | 2.45 | 11 | 2.33 | 12 | 2.5 | 18 |
| 3 | 2.0 | 5 | 2.09 | 11 | 2.23 | 13 | 2.42 | 7 |
| 2 | 3.0 | 1 | 2.25 | 4 | 2.33 | 3 | 2.66 | 3 |
| 1 | 0 | 0 | 3.0 | 1 | 2.66 | 3 | 2.0 | 1 |

Table 14 presents the total mean confidence rating for the general rating by all four social workers.

TABLE 14
MEAN CONFIDENCE RATING INDICATED BY SOCIAL WORKERS IN
DETERMINING THE GENERAL RATING OF THIRTY-NINE FAMILIES

| GENERAL RATING | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|---------------------------------|-------|------|------|------|------|
| Total mean Confidence Rating | 2.725 | 2.34 | 2.20 | 2.56 | 2.56 |

The social workers appeared to consistently give either very high or very low ratings to those families they felt they knew best. This would indicate that the high and low groupings used in this study consisted of the families the social workers knew best and felt that the workers were confident of their ratings of them. Those families who received combined general ratings and quadrant ranking scores in the middle also received the lowest confidence rating, perhaps indicating that the social workers did not know them well enough to be certain of their judgments and therefore their combined scores were not as valid as those given the high and low groups.

Section Three

Testing of the Hypotheses

The third section of Chapter IV is concerned with examining the three hypotheses. The relationship between the social workers' ratings of 39 foster families and the families total scores on the Family Adaptability Questionnaire will be examined. Seven additional families who applied to become foster families and were not selected were used as a reference group in comparing total raw scores between the three groups. The questionnaire is an attempt to adopt the constructs of adaptability and operationalize them as an aid in the selection of foster families.

Hypothesis I

There will be no significant correlation between the total Family Adaptability Questionnaire scores and the social workers' ratings of the families.

The total raw scores were correlated with the social workers' mean ratings of the families, using a Pearson correlation. The correlation was $-.28$ and therefore not significant.

Hypothesis II

No individual subsection on the Family Adaptability Questionnaire demonstrates a significant difference when statistically compared with the total score.

Using a two tailed t-test to compare subscale scores with total scores only the low rated foster families had a

significant value when subscale #1 was compared to the total mean scores for that group. Subscale #1 was constructed around the concept of spouse agreement on involvement in family decisions. The statistic was negative indicating that a high score on the questionnaire was likely to mean a low score on this particular subscale. Tables 15, 16, 17 and 18 present the results of the two tailed t-test. Because only one of the comparisons was significant, Hypothesis II cannot be completely rejected.

TABLE 15

COMPARISON OF SUBSCALE #1, SPOUSE AGREEMENT ON INVOLVEMENT
IN FAMILY DECISIONS WITH TOTAL SCORE

| GROUP NAME | MEAN | s.d. | t |
|------------|--------|-------|---------|
| HIGH n-13 | 2.0536 | .8942 | -1.385 |
| LOW n-13 | 2.0654 | .6339 | -3.154* |
| TOTAL HIGH | 2.4692 | .6086 | |
| TOTAL LOW | 2.5378 | .4261 | |

* $p < .025$ (df = 24)

TABLE 16
COMPARISON OF SUBSCALE #2, FLEXIBILITY OF SOCIAL RULES
WITH THE TOTAL SCORE

| GROUP NAME | MEAN | s.d. | t |
|------------|--------|--------|-------|
| HIGH n-13 | 2.7538 | 1.0046 | .8735 |
| LOW n-13 | 2.8923 | .9013 | 1.813 |
| TOTAL HIGH | 2.4692 | .6086 | |
| TOTAL LOW | 2.5370 | .4261 | |

$p < .025$ (df = 24)

TABLE 17
COMPARISON OF SUBSCALE #3, FAMILY COHESION AND UNITY WITH
THE TOTAL SCORE

| GROUP NAME | MEAN | s.d. | t |
|------------|--------|--------|--------|
| HIGH n-13 | 2.7538 | 1.0046 | .1769 |
| LOW n-13 | 2.3692 | .8649 | -.2473 |
| TOTAL HIGH | 2.4692 | .6086 | |
| TOTAL LOW | 2.5378 | .4261 | |

(df = 24)

TABLE 18
COMPARISON OF SUBSCALE #4, PARTICIPATION IN FAMILY
ACTIVITIES, WITH THE TOTAL SCORE

| GROUP NAME | MEAN | s.d. | t |
|------------|--------|-------|--------|
| HIGH n-13 | 2.7615 | .9793 | .9139 |
| LOW n-13 | 2.3999 | .9273 | -.6889 |
| TOTAL HIGH | 2.4692 | .6086 | |
| TOTAL LOW | 2.5378 | .4261 | |

(df = 24)

Hypothesis III

The High, Low and Reference groups, as identified by the social workers' rating, will not differ in their sub-scale scores.

Using an analysis of variance procedure to statistically compare the high, low and reference groups on the subscale scores of the Family Adaptability Questionnaire, no significant differences were found among the mean scores of the three groups. The level of confidence at the .05 level was not attained by any of the analyses. The groups were further separated into groups of mothers and fathers' mean scores, and there were no significant differences indicated at the .05 level of confidence. The statistics are presented in Tables 19-26.

TABLE 19
ANALYSIS OF MOTHERS' MEAN SCORES BETWEEN GROUPS FOR
SUBSCALE #1, SPOUSE AGREEMENT ON INVOLVEMENT
IN FAMILY DECISIONS

| Source | df | MS | F |
|-----------|----|------|-----|
| High | 12 | 3.97 | |
| Low | 12 | 4.80 | .23 |
| Reference | 6 | 4.71 | |

TABLE 20
ANALYSIS OF FATHERS' MEAN SCORES BETWEEN GROUPS FOR
SUBSCALE #1, SPOUSE AGREEMENT ON INVOLVEMENT
IN FAMILY DECISIONS

| Source | df | MS | F |
|-----------|----|------|-----|
| High | 12 | 4.45 | |
| Low | 12 | 3.72 | .52 |
| Reference | 6 | 3.17 | |

TABLE 21
ANALYSIS OF MOTHERS' SCORES BETWEEN GROUPS FOR
SUBSCALE #2, FLEXIBILITY OF SOCIAL ROLES

| Source | df | MS | F |
|-----------|----|------|-----|
| High | 12 | 8.58 | |
| Low | 12 | 9.06 | .04 |
| Reference | 6 | 9.67 | |

TABLE 22

ANALYSIS OF FATHERS' SCORES BETWEEN GROUPS FOR SUBSCALE #2,
FLEXIBILITY OF SOCIAL ROLES

| Source | df | MS | F |
|-----------|----|------|-----|
| High | 12 | 6.55 | |
| Low | 12 | 7.62 | .19 |
| Reference | 6 | 7.84 | |

TABLE 23

ANALYSIS OF MOTHERS' SCORES BETWEEN GROUPS FOR SUBSCALE #3,
FAMILY COHESION AND UNITY

| Source | df | MS | F |
|-----------|----|------|-----|
| High | 12 | 7.40 | |
| Low | 12 | 5.29 | .80 |
| Reference | 6 | 8.82 | |

TABLE 24

ANALYSIS OF FATHERS' SCORES BETWEEN GROUPS FOR SUBSCALE #3,
FAMILY COHESION AND UNITY

| Source | df | MS | F |
|-----------|----|------|-----|
| High | 12 | 5.43 | |
| Low | 12 | 5.90 | .19 |
| Reference | 6 | 4.65 | |

TABLE 25

ANALYSIS OF MOTHERS' SCORES BETWEEN GROUPS FOR SUBSCALE #4,
PARTICIPATION IN FAMILY ACTIVITIES

| Source | df | MS | F |
|-----------|----|------|------|
| High | 12 | 7.67 | |
| Low | 12 | 4.57 | 1.45 |
| Reference | 6 | 5.86 | |

TABLE 26

ANALYSIS OF FATHERS' SCORES BETWEEN GROUPS FOR SUBSCALE #4,
PARTICIPATION IN FAMILY ACTIVITIES

| Source | df | MS | F |
|-----------|----|------|-----|
| High | 12 | 5.43 | |
| Low | 12 | 5.90 | .19 |
| Reference | 6 | 4.65 | |

Table 27 shows an additional computation with subscale scores. The mothers' and fathers' scores in the high group appeared to be very similar, whereas the scores in the low group were not the same. The highest score was subtracted from the lowest and the mean differences were compared using a two tailed t-test.

The outcome was that there was a significant relationship, shown in Table 29 on subscale #1, which measured spouse agreement on involvement in family decisions. This positive relationship indicates that regardless of how the spouses

answered those questions referring to agreement on involvement in family decisions within the High group the couples tended to respond quite similarly while those in the Low group gave quite different responses. None of the other t-tests showed significant values. This additional investigation and its implications will be discussed in Chapter V.

TABLE 27

COMPARISON OF THE NUMERIC DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MOTHERS' AND FATHERS' SCORES FOR HIGH AND LOW GROUPS ON SUBSCALE #1, SPOUSE AGREEMENT ON INVOLVEMENT IN FAMILY DECISIONS

| GROUP NAME | MEAN | s.d. | t-Value |
|------------|-------|-------|---------|
| HIGH | .1230 | .3982 | |
| LOW | .2769 | .3744 | 2.638* |

$p < .025$

C H A P T E R V

DISCUSSION

Restatement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to adopt the construct of adaptability, as a measure of family functioning, as an aid in the selection of foster families. This was done by (1) developing a family adaptability questionnaire; (2) administering the questionnaire to 39 active foster families and seven families who applied and were not selected; (3) comparing the total family adaptability scores to agency ratings of the 39 active foster families.

Summary

There were a total of 46 families who participated in this investigation; 39 active foster families from the same agency and seven families who applied to become foster families with this same agency and were not selected. The 39 families had been selected from an active case roster of 70 families. For the process of selection the following criteria were used; the family was intact with two parents; at least one child had been placed with the family prior to this project; and the family was known to at least two social workers. Four social workers independently rated the families using a three step procedure. A general rating, a confidence rating of the general rating and a quadrant ranking

was obtained for each family by at least two social workers.

The families were divided into a high, middle and low group determined by the total mean rating given by the social workers for each family. The additional seven families, who applied and were not selected, were used as a reference group. For the purposes of this study only the high and low rated foster families were used for statistical evaluations. The additional seven families were used for comparison and are referred to as the Reference group.

The hypotheses were: 1) there was to be no significant correlation between the total raw score on the Family Adaptability Questionnaire for a particular foster family and the social workers' mean rating for that family in its ability to adapt successfully to foster placement; 2) the Family Adaptability Questionnaire would not discriminate between social workers' ratings of the foster families, when total scores were used for the comparison; and 3) there would be no significant differences between the raw scores or the subsections scores on the Family Adaptability Questionnaire of these families who were rated in the highest third when compared to the raw scores or the subsection scores of those families who were rated in the lowest third or were not selected.

To test Hypothesis I a Pearson correlation was done. The correlation between the social workers' ratings for a particular family and the family's score on the Family

Adaptability Questionnaire was $-.28$. Hypotheses I could not be rejected.

The second hypothesis was tested using a two tailed t-test. The relationship between the total score and subscale #1 for the low rated group had a significant t-value of -3.154 . Subscale II, measured spouse agreement on involvement in family decisions. This suggests that a high total score on the questionnaire was likely to result in a low score on the subscale constructed to measure spouse agreement on involvement in family decisions. This suggests that, as compared to the High group, the low group of foster families did not agree with each other as to involvement in making decisions that concerned the family, including child rearing, finances, and how to spend leisure time.

The relationship between subscale #2 and the total score was not significant for the High and Low group. This subscale, constructed to assess flexibility of social roles within the family was not a significant indicator of the total score.

The relationship between subscale #4 and the total score was not significant at the $.05$ level of confidence. This suggests that participation in family activities is not a predictor of total family scores.

Using an analysis of variance to test the differences between the three groups for Hypothesis III, there were no statistically significant differences between the High, Low

and non-selected families used as a reference group on either their total scores or the sub-test scores. This was true for both the total scores and the subscale scores. It was true when all of the mothers' scores were compared and all of the fathers' scores were compared. None of the four subscales; spouse agreement on family decisions, flexibility of social roles within the family, family cohesion and unity and participation in family activities differentiated the three groups using an analysis of variance procedure.

An additional analysis was done comparing the differences between mothers' and fathers' scores between the High and Low groups on each of the four subscales. The variability within the couples' score was less in the High group of foster families than in the Low group of families. The High group had a total mean difference of $-.12$. The Low group had a total mean difference of $.27$. This significant result indicates that the High rated foster families were able to agree on the amount of agreement they had. Even if they disagreed often, they agreed that they did disagree. This is a meta-communicative statement and it appears that these High couples implicitly understand how much agreement there was between them. The other comparisons of mean scores were not significant at the $.05$ level of confidence.

The results of this study are inconclusive with respect to the three hypotheses tested. There may or may not be predictive value to the instrument developed for this study. It

cannot be ascertained whether the instrument can differentiate between High rated foster families and Low rated foster families.

In view of the inconclusive findings of the investigation reported here, it is necessary to confront and explore possible explanations to why the Family Adaptability Questionnaire did not differentiate the foster families the social workers indicated were functioning at different levels.

The social workers' judgment appeared to be reliable. There was consistency to their ratings. This was further explored through the confidence rating which clarified that the 26 active foster families used for statistical comparisons in this study were well known to the raters and that the judgments were confidently made. The social workers' ratings are assumed to be a genuine appraisal of the foster family's functioning.

The scales that were used to assess family adaptability were taken from previous studies done by Cavan (1936) and Hill (1949). Each author had researched the concept of adaptability and how it affected a families' ability to deal with crisis or stress. Hill's study in particular was concerned with the family's ability to adapt to the husband/father's absence and return to the family during the Second World War. In light of the non-significant results of the present project, it would seem advisable to discuss whether

these are the correct scales with which to measure adaptability as presently defined.

Subscale #1 had a significant negative relationship with total family scores for the Low group. It appeared to be the only subscale that was able to demonstrate a relationship with the total scores.

There was a significant comparison when the within couple variability was examined between the High and Low groups. This subscale was able to differentiate between the two groups on the dimension that assess spouse agreement on involvement in family decisions.

The response set of the instrument may have been an important factor in its inability to differentiate the families in the High, Low and Reference groups. Although the families had been assured that the interview would have no influence on their role with the agency, this researcher believes that most families did not believe this and answered as they thought a "good" family should answer.

Recommendations/Implications

The purpose of this study was to ask some preliminary questions and begin to develop the rudimentary foundations towards adopting the constructs of adaptability to the selection of foster families. The inconclusive results of this study appeared to be more the result of the response set of the instrument than of the constructs. It would be

recommended that the constructs be presented less obstrusively, focusing more on the process of adaptability than the actual content, the how rather than the what. Unobstrusive statements that a family member might respond to without answering as he/she imagines he/she should. This is a particularly sensitive area if it is to be used to aid social agencies in selecting foster families.

The construct of adaptability, in this researcher's thinking are a useful way of selecting healthy foster families. The subscales used to operationalize the constructs were not useful in differentiating the families the social workers' judged to be functioning well from those judged to be functioning inadequately. Therefore, in terms of making recommendations about selecting healthy foster families, this cannot be done. Further research is needed to construct an instrument that would be sensitive to the nuances of family adaptability.

The interviews done with foster families discussed in Chapter III provides information that might be helpful in future research. The first recommendation might be more detailed case studies of the whole foster family. Previous case studies have focused on individuals rather than family systems. A good foster family might prove to be a model for healthy family functioning.

The ability of the High group of foster parents to understand, in an apparently successful way, the

meta-communicative statements of each other is a concept that could be an important area for further research.

Limitations

As in any field of research, this study is limited by a number of factors. The major limitations are (1) there was no control for the agency used in this study. They may have been idiosyncratic in the way in which they selected foster families as compared to another social work agency, (2) the study was limited by the unknown reliability of the instrument used. This was a serious limitation, but unavoidable when new concepts are being tested, and (3) this study was limited by not being a longitudinal study and was only concerned with the responses at the time of the interview.

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APPENDIX A

Data Collecting Instrument

Family Adaptability Questionnaire

FAMILY INTERVIEW

1. Everyday families make decisions that involve the whole family.

We would like to know how these decisions are made. To what extent

do you and your spouse agree or not on the following statements? (circle one)

| | STRONGLY AGREE | | | | STRONGLY DISAGREE | | | |
|---|----------------|---|---|---|-------------------|---|---|--|
| a. what kind of car to buy | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| b. when dinner is served | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| c. where to go on vacations | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| d. what evening T.V. show to watch | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| e. how to discipline the children | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| f. when to discipline the children | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| g. how money is handled | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| h. moving the furniture around | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| i. activities with your in-laws | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| j. setting bedtime hours for the children | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |

2. How involved is your spouse in these household tasks? (circle one)

| | ALWAYS | | | | | NEVER | |
|---|--------|---|---|---|---|-------|---|
| a. refinishing furniture | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| b. taking care of a sick child | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| c. fixing small things around the house | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| d. preparing meals | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| e. getting the car repaired | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

strongly agree strongly disagree

- | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

crisis? (circle one number) many some few none

- | | | | | | | |
|---------------|---|------|---|-----|---|------|
| many times | | some | | few | | none |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

| | | | |
|-------------|-----------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| one number) | very well | moderately well | with great difficulty |
|-------------|-----------|-----------------|-----------------------|

- | | | | | | | |
|-----------|---|---|-----------------|---|-----------------------|---|
| very well | | | moderately well | | with great difficulty | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

always never

- | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

- | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

- | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

- | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

- | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

APPENDIX B

Cover Letters to Participating Families

CENTER for the STUDY of INSTITUTIONAL ALTERNATIVES

22 Concord Terrace, Springfield, Mass. 01109. 413 733 6624

Dear

C.S.I.A. is concerned with providing more effective services for the foster families and children that we serve. As a former C.S.I.A. foster family we felt that it would be very helpful to find out your experiences as a foster family, and some information about how your family works together.

In order for this study to be less biased, we have arranged for an independent group to do the interviews. We would appreciate your help in successfully completing this project. An interviewer will be calling you within the next two weeks to arrange an interview with both of you. The interview will remain confidential, and your name will not be used in the final report. Thank-you for your cooperation in our effort to make our services even more effective,

Sincerely,

C.S.I.A. staff

CENTER for the STUDY of INSTITUTIONAL ALTERNATIVES

22 Concord Terrace, Springfield, Mass. 01109. 413 733 6621

February 11, 1975

Dear

The staff at C.S.I.A. is attempting to improve our services to you and to other foster parents. In an effort to do this we need your help. We feel that information from you-about the ways you've found of doing things with your families and with foster children, and comments about how you think services can be improved, would be helpful. With hopes of making our survey more objective the agency has arranged to have a private consulting team meet and talk with foster parents regarding the above. Your conversation with the interviewer will be kept confidential. Your name will not be used within the summary of interview results which C.S.I.A. receives from these outside interviewers.

An interviewer will be calling you within the next 2-3 days and will ask the two of you (or you alone if you are a single parent) to arrange as convenient a time as possible for you to meet and talk for about 1 hour.

We hope the interview time will be pleasant and useful for you, and that as a result we will be better able to continue to support you in the valuable work you and your family are doing.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

C.S.I.A. Staff

CENTER for the STUDY of INSTITUTIONAL ALTERNATIVES

22 Concord Terrace, Springfield, Mass. 01109, 413 733 6621

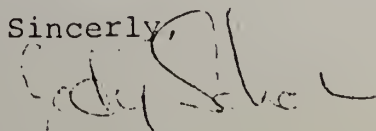
May 2, 1975

Dear

I am doing a project on families that have shown an interest in becoming a foster family. The study is being done with the cooperation of C.S.I.A.. They suggested that you might be willing to participate in the project. I would like to spend a bout a half hour with you and your spouse. Part of the interview will be spent filling out a questionnaire about family decisions and the rest will be spent talking about your thoughts about wanting to become a foster family.

I will be calling you within the next week to arrange a time that would be convenient for us to meet. The interview will remain confidential and your name will not be used in the final report. Thank you for any help that you can give me in the completion for this project.

Sincerely,



Jody Schor.

APPENDIX C

Total Scores and Subscale Family

Adaptability Scores

Total and Sub-scale Raw Family Scores

| FAMILY | TOTAL SCORE | SUBSCALE #1 | SUBSCALE #2 | SUBSCALE #3 | SUBSCALE #4 |
|--------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| 01 | 124 | 58 | 20 | 21 | 17 |
| 02 | 99 | 20 | 10 | 6 | 48 |
| 03 | 84 | 26 | 20 | 10 | 20 |
| 04 | 97 | 27 | 32 | 13 | 18 |
| 05 | 121 | 36 | 14 | 22 | 23 |
| 06 | 182 | 72 | 42 | 22 | 33 |
| 07 | 107 | 39 | 29 | 11 | 15 |
| 08 | 121 | 47 | 24 | 17 | 19 |
| 09 | 107 | 25 | 26 | 8 | 34 |
| 10 | 97 | 20 | 30 | 12 | 28 |
| 11 | 144 | 48 | 31 | 15 | 24 |
| 12 | 174 | 71 | 44 | 16 | 38 |
| 13 | 148 | 45 | 36 | 26 | 32 |
| 14 | 101 | 35 | 26 | 16 | 14 |
| 15 | 134 | 40 | 28 | 21 | 20 |
| 16 | 154 | 48 | 33 | 20 | 24 |
| 17 | 95 | 31 | 24 | 12 | 13 |
| 18 | 116 | 28 | 26 | 16 | 31 |
| 19 | 134 | 42 | 27 | 13 | 24 |
| 20 | 160 | 45 | 38 | 21 | 29 |
| 21 | 168 | 48 | 42 | 22 | 34 |
| 22 | 118 | 26 | 18 | 14 | 25 |
| 23 | 116 | 37 | 24 | 28 | 20 |
| 24 | 142 | 40 | 32 | 22 | 16 |
| 25 | 124 | 29 | 21 | 18 | 22 |
| 26 | 131 | 31 | 34 | 17 | 27 |
| 27 | 137 | 41 | 23 | 15 | 39 |
| 28 | 125 | 43 | 32 | 14 | 21 |
| 29 | 166 | 63 | 39 | 22 | 27 |
| 30 | 158 | 41 | 36 | 22 | 37 |
| 31 | 107 | 25 | 24 | 12 | 21 |
| 32 | 124 | 52 | 34 | 20 | 29 |
| 33 | 118 | 51 | 11 | 9 | 12 |
| 34 | 115 | 47 | 23 | 13 | 15 |
| 35 | 119 | 21 | 20 | 10 | 32 |
| 36 | 121 | 42 | 43 | 17 | 28 |
| 37 | 115 | 26 | 38 | 7 | 10 |
| 38 | 87 | 32 | 27 | 17 | 15 |
| 39 | 103 | 36 | 26 | 21 | 10 |
| 40 | 127 | 43 | 34 | 10 | 21 |
| 41 | 147 | 45 | 27 | 18 | 28 |
| 42 | 125 | 28 | 39 | 19 | 22 |
| 43 | 145 | 21 | 33 | 15 | 41 |
| 44 | 130 | 38 | 28 | 15 | 21 |
| 45 | 124 | 44 | 17 | 14 | 39 |
| 46 | 112 | 48 | 29 | 18 | 12 |

APPENDIX D
Social Workers' Ratings

| ID | QUADRANT | | | | GENERAL RATING | | | | LEVEL OF CONFIDENCE | | | |
|----|----------|---------|---------|---------|----------------|---------|---------|---------|---------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| | Rater 1 | Rater 2 | Rater 3 | Rater 4 | Rater 1 | Rater 2 | Rater 3 | Rater 4 | Rater 1 | Rater 2 | Rater 3 | Rater 4 |
| 01 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| 02 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| 03 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 0 |
| 04 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| 05 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| 06 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| 07 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| 08 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| 09 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| 10 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| 11 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 2 |
| 12 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 2 |
| 13 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| 14 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 2 |
| 15 | 3 | 0 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 0 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 3 |
| 16 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 3 |
| 17 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| 18 | 0 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| 19 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| 20 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| 21 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| 22 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| 23 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| 24 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 3 |
| 25 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| 26 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 27 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| 28 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2 |
| 29 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| 30 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| 31 | 0 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 0 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 2 |
| 32 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| 33 | 4 | 0 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| 34 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 2 |
| 35 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| 36 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| 37 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| 38 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| 39 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 3 |

